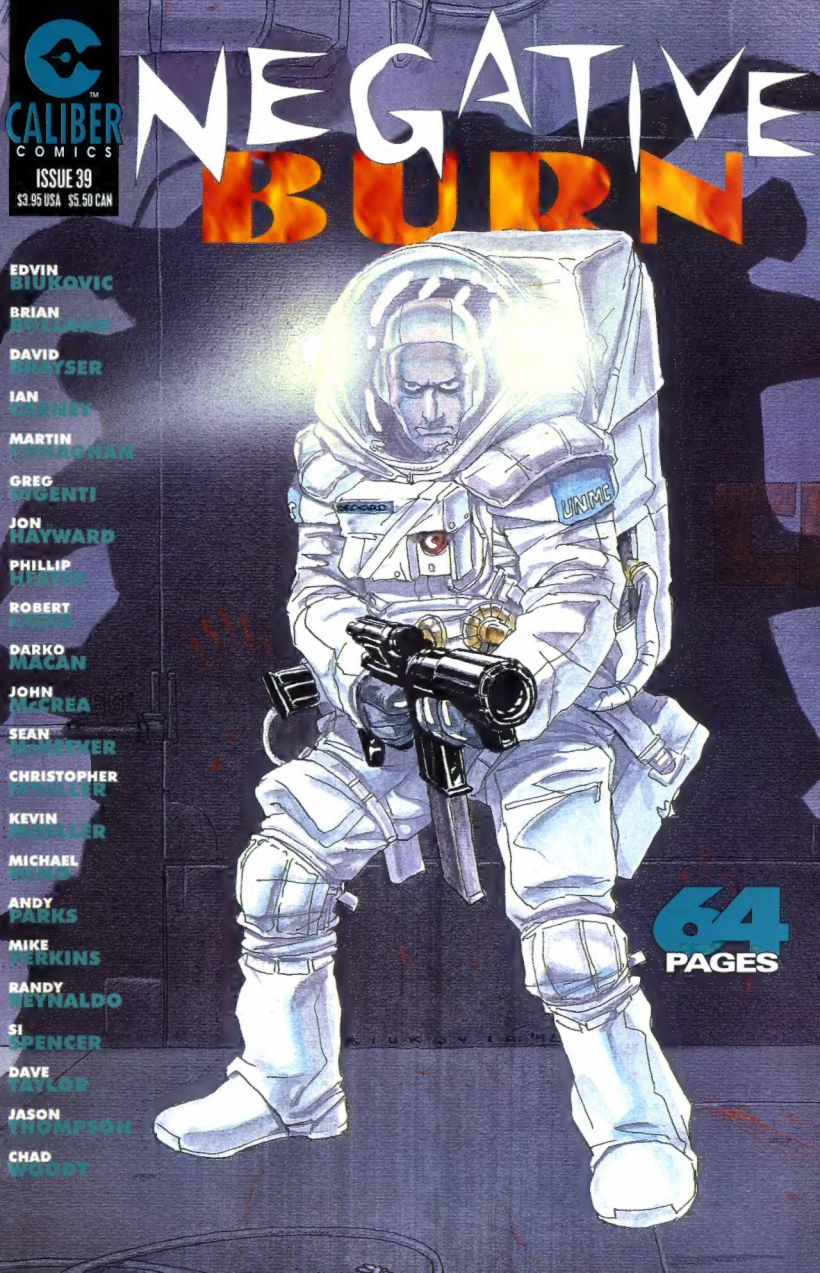
CALIBER
COMICS
ISSUE 39
$3.95 USA $5.50 CAN
NEGATIVE
BURN
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Joe Pruett / Editor
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Acworth, GA
30101

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72164,1134

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS

*USA 6 issues $24.00*
*12 issues $48.00 /*
*Canada or Overseas 6 issues $33.00*
*12 issues $66.00*
*Please make check or money order in U.S. Dollars payable to JOE PRUETT. P.O. Box 893, Acworth, GA 30101*

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tinea
OK, BOYS AND GIRLS! THAT UP THERE IS LINEA, ONE OF THE RIPLEY CLASS. AND ON IT THERE IS A NASTY STOWAWAY --
STORY BY DARKO MACAN, ART BY EDVIN BILIKOVIC'
A MONSTER'S CUB SNEAKED ON BOARD, GREW UP QUICKLY, ATE THREE CREW MEMBERS.
LEVEL 14
THE CAPTAIN GOT AWAY 'CAUSE HIS CABIN WAS THE NEAREST TO THE EMERGENCY HATCH --
PRIVILEGES OF THE RANK, HUH?
UNMC
THE HUNT STARTS ONCE WE LEAVE THIS CHAMBER. I'LL BUY A BEER FOR EVERYONE WHO MAKES IT BACK ALIVE!
WHAT'S THAT – A REMOTE FOR THE DOOR?
1
YUP. THE BRASS THINK IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY IF WE DECIDED TO SUCK THE CREATURE INTO THE VACUUM!
THEY RENTED OUT ALIEN WAY TOO MANY TIMES!

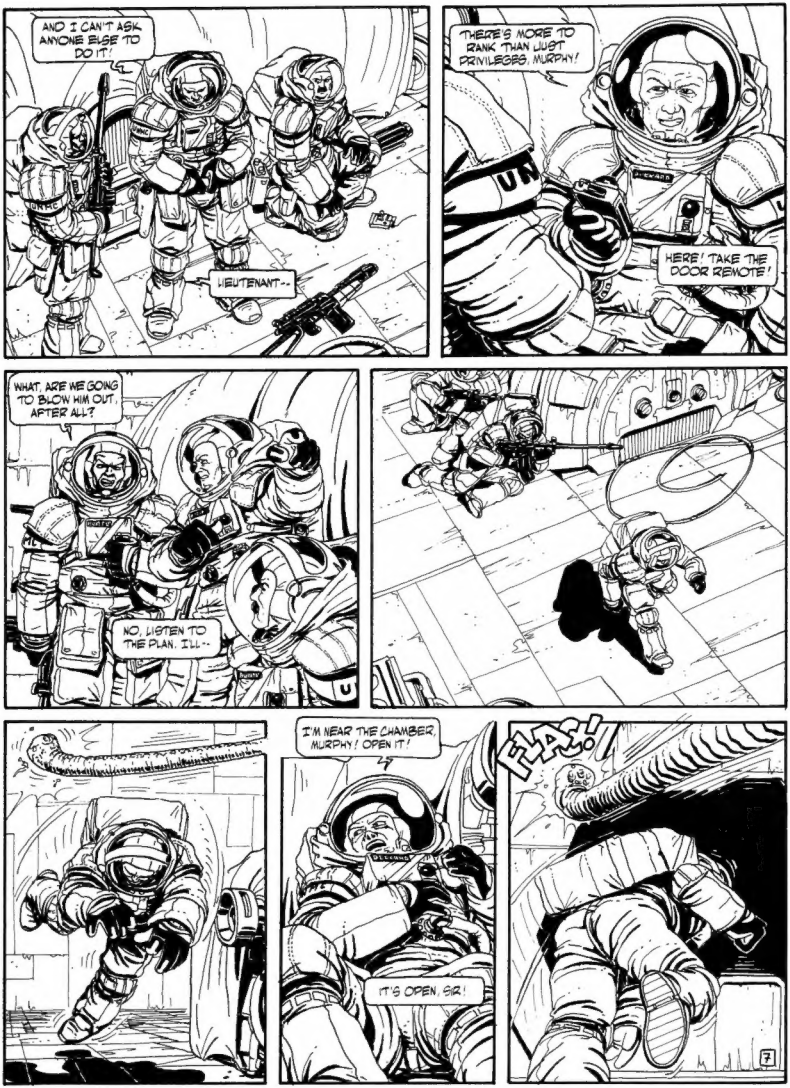
STAY TOGETHER, GUYS!
USMC
SHIT!
AYE AYE, SIR!
IT GOT RID OF THE UNDIGESTED PARTS. TAKE A SLIME SAMPLE, VASQUEZ!
WHO--WHO WAS THAT, LIEUTENANT?
ONE OF THE CREW PROBABLY. SCOTT, O'BANNON, WEAVER...
THEY'D LOVE THIS IN HOLLYWOOD!
OH, NO! NOT WEAVER, SIR! I--I KNEW HER!
YOU LOOK PALE, IAN. WANNA RETURN TO THE SHUTTLE?
NO, IT'S OKAY... I'LL BE OKAY...
LOOK OUT!

?!
STLK!
FIRE AT WILL!
SHOOT THE SONOVABITCH APART!
SHIT! NOT EVEN A SCRATCH!
RETREAT! GET OUT OF THE TONGUE'S REACH!

THERE MUST BE A WAY TO GET THAT FUCKER!
THROAT.
WHAT?
HIS THROAT. HE'S NOT ARMORED ON THE INSIDE! IF WE CHUCK A FEW GRENADES DOWN THERE...
©EDVIN BIUKOVIĆ & ENRICO MACAN
NO! WE CAN'T DO A THING! WE'LL ALL END UP LIKE WEAVER... AND VASQUEZ... ALL OF US!
IAN!
CALM DOWN, IAN! DON'T BREAK DOWN ON US NOW!
NO! NO!
SHEE--
HE'S DEAD!

SPLAC!
I'_ CAP!
LOOK AT THE BASTARD! PLAYING WITH IAN!
NO... I DON'T THINK THAT'S IT...
NMC
IAN...
NMC
FROG! IT'S A DAMN FROG!
LIEUTENANT! DON'T LET
MEEE...

FROG, SIR?
IT'S TONGUE AND IT'S EYES, MURPHY!
A FROG SEES ONLY WHAT MOVES! THAT'S WHY IAN WAS SAFE WHILE LYING STILL!
IT OPENS THE TRAP POSSIBILITIES!
A MAINTENANCE ROBOT!
CAN YOU ATTACH A MINE TO IT, BORIS? WITH A REMOTE TRIGGER?
NO PROBLEM, SIR!
IT'S DONE, SIR!
SEND IT!
IT DOESN'T BUY IT! MAYBE IT CAN TELL IT'S A MACHINE!
WE'LL NEED A VOLUNTEER!
6


AND I CAN'T ASK ANYONE ELSE TO DO IT.
LIEUTENANT--
THERE'S MORE TO RANK THAN JUST PRIVILEGES, MURPHY!
HERE! TAKE THE DOOR REMOTE!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO BLOW HIM OUT, AFTER ALL?
NO, LISTEN TO THE PLAN. I'LL--
I'M NEAR THE CHAMBER MURPHY! OPEN IT!
IT'S OPEN, SIR!
FLASH!
7

HERE I AM, YOU SLIMY BASTARD! GET ME IF YOU CAN!
NOW!
STOM!!
C'MON, BORIS, IT'S OPEN WIIIIDE!
5...4...
3...2...1...

BOOM!
...ZERO!
FOR IAN AND VASQUEZ!
FOR IAN AND VASQUEZ!
UNMC
Uhh... LIEUTENANT?
©DAWN BRANCHINI & DAVID MACK
THE FROGS, THEY SWALLOW THEIR PREY. WHAT IF IAN AND VASQUEZ WERE STILL ALIVE WHEN WE...Y'KNOW, WHEN WE--
UNMC
DRINK THAT BEER!
Fin

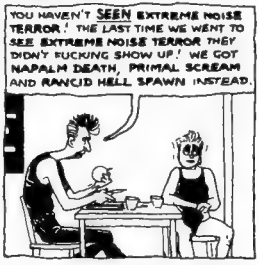
MR. MAMOULIAN

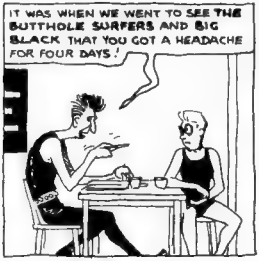
# EXTREME NOISE TERROR

3-4 '87 ROLAND 42

ON TUESDAY IT'S ELVIS HITLER, ART-PHAG AND EXPANDOBRAIN. ELVIS HITLER AND ART-PHAG ARE ON WANG-HEAD RECORDS. I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT LABEL EXPANDOBRAIN ARE ON ... MAYBE VINYL SOLUTION ... OR WAS IT FATAL ERECTION !

SO WHAT ABOUT GOING TO SEE EXTREME NOISE TERROR ON SATURDAY ?
I'VE ALREADY SEEN EXTREME NOISE TERROR AND I HAD A SPLITTING HEADACHE FOR FOUR DAYS !

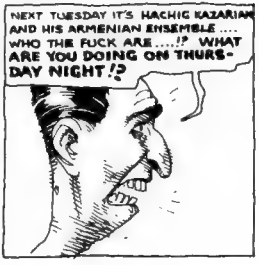

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN EXTREME NOISE TERROR ! THE LAST TIME WE WENT TO SEE EXTREME NOISE TERROR THEY DIDN'T FUCKING SHOW UP ! WE GOT NAPALM DEATH, PRIMAL SCREAM AND RANCID HELL SPAWN INSTEAD.



THURSDAY IT'S THE MORTICIANS, THE CRAMPS AND DEMENTED ARE GO ... OR THE HOLLOW MEN, GIANT SAND AND THE WALKING SEEDS.
I'M DOING SOMETHING ON THURSDAY NIGHT.

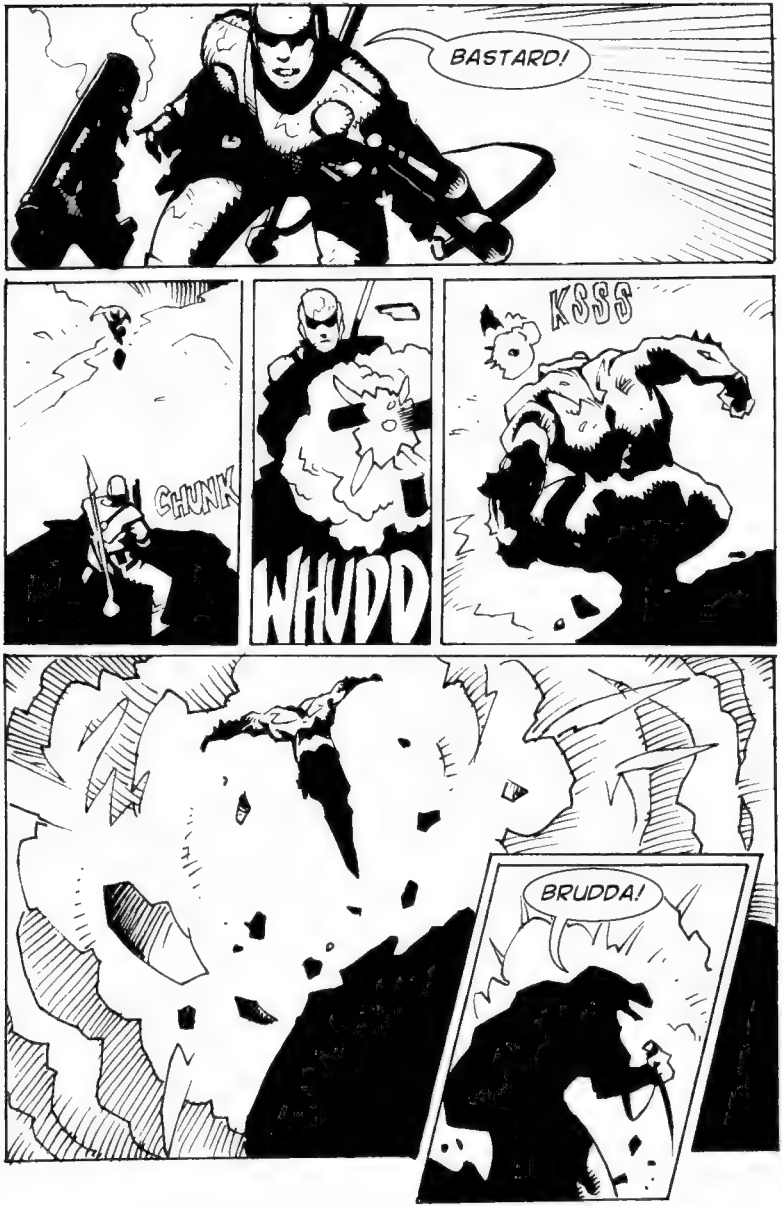
FRIDAY IT'S STUMP, SLAB, THE SINK, AND GOD .. OR THE SEX GANG CHILDREN, GAY BIKERS ON ACID, AND WITH SPECIAL GUESTS LESBIAN DOPE-HEADS ON MOPEDS.

ANYWAY THE SEWER ZOMBIES HAVE NEVER PLAYED WITH EXTREME NOISE TERROR OR NAPALM DEATH. LAST TIME THEY PLAYED IT WAS WITH MASTERS OF THE OBVIOUS AND LUDICHRIST.



Manfwarf Brother
IRON EMPIRES
KRAK
JOU FOUGHT AND DIED LIKE A LIDDLE ANT, SOLCHUR. DAT VAS VERY BEAUTIFUL.

VREET
TSSHH
A HEAT WARHEAD WITH A FOLLOW-ON ROUND, DESIGNED TO DOUBLE-PUNCH LIGHT ARMOR.
SHHHHH!!
AT 1200 KPH, THEY'LL KILL HIM EVEN IF THEY DON'T GO OFF.
Tak
Tak
AHK'S BLOOD!
VASMO!
BKKOOM


BASTARD!
CHUNK
WHUDD
KSSS
BRUDDA!

CHING
DA RIVER FLOWS ROUNT AND ROUNT, AND BRINGS ME BACK TO MY BRUDDA.
ZTTT
ZZOCK
KRAK
ZZAMPF

CHAK
DON'T DO IT!

HEY!
YOU'RE THAT TRAITOR PILOT...KHAZAR, AREN'T YOU?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
LOOK, I DON'T CARE, PARTICULARLY.
I AM--
--I WAS WITH A FREE COMPANY. THAT HADN'T SEEN A SINGLE DARIKAHN COIN IN THREE MONTHS.
IN FACT, JUST BEFORE YOUR LIZARD BUDDIES FINISHED US OFF, WE'D DEFECTED TO SOME DUNEDIN CRUSADERS.
NOW THEY'VE BEEN SMEARED BY ELIAS, AND WHAT LITTLE REMAINED OF MY PLATOON'S BEEN SMEARED BY YOU.
GUESS YOU CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH ME FOR BEING A TRAITOR TO THE DARIKAHN.
BY THE WAY, WHERE'S THE KID YOU TOOK?
YOU KNOW, YOUR PICTURE'S BEEN DOWNLOADED INTO EVERY INFANTRY C4 ON THE PLANET.
ELIAS IS OFFERING 10K TO ANYONE WHO BRINGS HIM THE GIRL ...AND YOUR HEAD.
SEEMS TO ME WE COULD BOTH USE A LITTLE HELP GETTING CLEAR OF THAT BASTARD.
HMMMM?
WELL I'M NOT SURE THAT'S ENTIRELY UP TO ME TO DECIDE

I DON'T KNOW, BRUDDA...
EVEN DOUGH SHE NEARLY KILT US, I TINK MAYBE PAPA MEANT FOR US TO BE FRIENDS VIT HER TOO.
YOU TINK SO, BRUDDA?
DAT'S RIGHT, I DO.
DOT'S A LOTTA NEW FRIENDS AND VEE GOT DA CUTE LIDDLE GIRL TOO NOW...
I TINK WE SUPPOSED TO TAKE CARE OF THESE PEOPLES BEE-NUT. WATCH OUT FOR DEM. CATCH DEM SOME SQUIRRELS TO EAT MAYBE.
VEE DO VOT YOU SAY, BRUDDA.
REMEMBER VOT PAPA TOL US. YOU BE NICE TO DA RABBITS, DEY COME BACK AND LEAVE YOU PELLETS
DOT'S RIGHT, BRUDDA. I MISS PAPA
ME TOO BRUDDA.

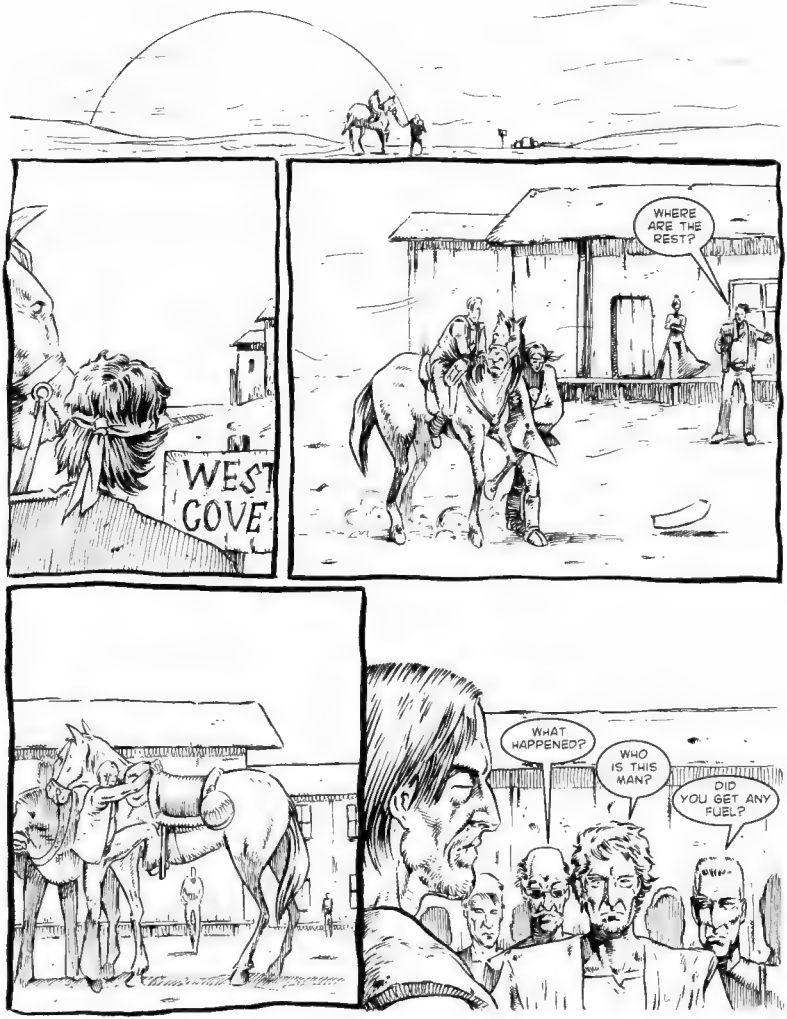
BEE-NUT UND I HAFF DECIDED.
JOU TRY TO KILL US, UND VEE TRY TO KILL JOU. DAT AS FUN BUT IT'S OVER NOW.
NOW YOUR OWN RIVER TELLING YOU TO WALK VIT US. VEE HELP YOU.
WELL, IF IT'S OKAY WITH THE KID, I THINK WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A DEAL.
DOT'S GOOD VEE GO TO MOUNTAINS NOW. VEE GOT FRIENDS DER.
BUT VEE GOT TO BE CAREFUL. THERE'S AN OUTPOST THAT WATCHES THE HILLS. VERY DANGEROUS..
BUT YOU VIT GRITZ AND BEE-NUT NOW. VEE HELP YOU GET DERE
WINK
YA, IT A LONG WAY, BUT LIFE IS LIKE DAT.
JOU JUS WALK IN ONE DIRECTION AN NEXT TING YOU KNOW, JOU GOTTA KILL TEN SOLCHURS.
BUT YOU MAKING FRIENDS TOO, AS YOU WALK. ME AND BEE-NUT, VEE ALWAYS MAKING FRIENDS.
©1996

CONTINUED IN ISSUE #41

REILLY'S TRADING POST, NORTH RIZON.
BRRRR
RUMM
MMM
CASEY, GO TAKE A LOOK OUTSIDE--SEE WHAT'S GOIN' ON.

THE BRUTALIZERS
Part Two: BRUTALIZERS
VRRRM
RMMMMMM
RARRRA
LET'S TAKE IN THE SIGHTS, FOLKS.
REILLY'S

WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT-- WE'RE TAKING
NOW LOOK HERE, WE...WE DON'T WANT NO TROUBLE.
THEN GIVE US EVERY-THING YOU'VE GOT-- INCLUDING YOUR CURRENCY.
BOOM!!
DRINKS ARE ON THE HOUSE.


WEST
COVE
WHERE ARE THE REST?
WHAT HAPPENED?
WHO IS THIS MAN?
DID YOU GET ANY FUEL?

THIS MAN SAVED MY LIFE --FROM THE BRUTALIZERS.
LET ME THROUGH!
LET ME THROUGH!
WHAT HAPPENED, KENZO?
--WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
THEY'RE DEAD, MR. HARPER--THEY KILLED EVERYONE, TOOK ALL OUR STUFF--BURNED THE REST.

HOW DID THIS MAN SAVE YOU?--WHAT DID HE DO?
HE...HE KILLED TWO OF THEM .TWO OF THE BRUTALIZERS.
ALL I WANT IS SOME FOOD, AND SOME WATER FOR MY HOR--
--THIS MAN *HERE*, KILLED *TWO* OF THE BRUTALIZERS?
UH-HUH.
THEN I'M AFRAID HE'S NOT WELCOME HERE--I THINK YOU'D BETTER LEAVE, STRANGER.

**End of Part Two**

BERT PERSUN
IN
I'LL MEET YOU THERE
BY GREG DIGENTI...
WHY DO I AGREE TO MEETING PEOPLE AT BARS? OR ANY PLACE FOR THAT MATTER?
NOBODY'S EVER ON TIME. I MEAN, HELL, THAT JERK WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HERE TWENTY MINUTES AGO.
THE WORST PART ABOUT IT IS I FEEL SO STUPID SITTING IN A BAR BY MYSELF...
...LIKE EVERYONE IN THE PLACE IS STARING AT ME... THE FRIENDLESS LOSER CRYING IN HIS BEER.
SCREW IT
GLUG GLUG
DAMN, THAT ASSHOLE. IF HE'S NOT HERE BY THE TIME I FINISH MY BEER, I'M OUTTA' HERE.
FUCK 'EM.
GOD- WHAT IF HE WRECKED? HE COULD BE LYING IN A DITCH SOMEWHERE, BLEEDING TO DEATH, WHILE I SIT HERE GRIPING ABOUT PETTY CRAP.
I'D FEEL LIKE A REAL SHMUCK, THEN.

THAT'S SO UNLIKELY, THOUGH. I'M SURE HE'S JUST TAKING HIS SWEET FUCKIN' TIME. HE MUST TAKE ME FOR A REAL SUCKER.
WHAT A JERK.
GLUB GLUB
DAMN, THIS BEER IS GETTING WARM AS HELL. I GUESS I'VE MILKED IT ABOUT AS LONG AS I CAN.
TIME TO GO.
UH, HEY, BARTENDER! HOW MUCH DO I OWE YOU?
LET'S SEE... YOU HAD ONE BEER, WHICH YOU ALREADY PAID FOR, SO THAT COMES OUT TO... AH... NOTHING.
OH, YEAH. RIGHT. OKAY, WELL, THANKS.
JEEZ, WHAT A SMART ASS.
THANKS FOR VISITING BIG JOHN'S! COME AGAIN!
WAIT A MINUTE... BIG JOHNS...?
UH... I'VE BEEN WAITING IN THE WRONG BAR.
THE "I'M SUCH A SHMOE" SMILE
END

# SHADOW CITY: PROLOGUE

WRITER NICK WYCHE
ARTIST JOHN R. HOLMES

"2:00 A.M."
WAKE ME UP AT 12:30 ...
MIDDLE OF THE GODDAMN NIGHT...
ASK ME TO COME OUT HERE
TO THE LAND OF THE FREAKS
AND THE HOME OF THE WEIRD...

TO "PAY A COURTESY CALL" ON THE
HEAD FREAKIN' GHOUL HIMSELF --

NOW, LET'S GO OVER IT AGAIN'
THE CAPTAIN CALLS YOU UP
AFTER YOU'VE JUST DONE 24 HOURS
STRAIGHT AND HADN'T BEEN HOME
MORE THAN TWO HOURS...
BARELY ENOUGH TIME TO GET TO SLEEP..
'TELLS ME TO COME OUT AND
PICK UP SOMETHING' FROM
DARIAN FREAKIN' MASSEROFF...
BUNCHA GODDAMN CROOKS
IN THIS STINKIN' CITY.
LIKE I'M NOT BRIGHT
ENOUGH TO FIGURE
OUT WHAT THE HELL'S
GOIN' DOWN, WHAT,
WITH THE GORILLA
BROTHERS PLASTERED
TO MY SIDE, CLOSER
THAN MY BRA.
WHY DOES MY SKIN ALWAYS
START CRAWLIN' EVERY TIME
I GET NEAR THIS DAMN PLACE?

WELL, THIS IS IT. "INTO THE VALLEY OF DEATH RODE THE 10 ..."
AHH, LIEUTENANT BERG! SO NICE TO MEET YOU. MR MASSEROFF IS EXPECTING YOU...
WHOA
PLEASE FOLLOW ME, MA'AM
DAMN BLOODSUCKERS..
UH, LOOT... I THINK WE SHOULD WAIT DOWN HERE, Y'KNOW, P'ROTECTIN' THE FRONT 'X'S NO ONE GETS ATCHA..
NO.
WELL, AT LEAST, IT'S NICE TO SEE THAT EVEN THE GORILLA BROS ARE A LITTLE...INTIMIDATED BY THIS STEEL & GLASS MAUSOLEUM.
JUST KEEP SAYING TO YOURSELF, "IT'S NOT THAT BAD, YOU CAN HANDLE THIS."
TOLD YA
THANK YOU FOR VISITING PM INDUSTRIES. PLEASE ENTER THE TRANSPORT NOW
YEAH, MAYBE SOONER OR LATER, I'LL BELIEVE IT.

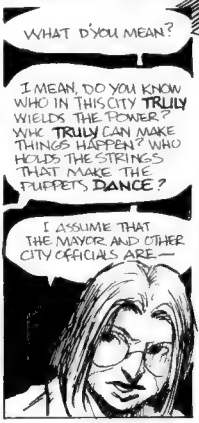
TO WHICH FLOOR MAY I TAKE YOU?
PENTHOUSE LEVEL, PLEASE
PENTHOUSE LEVEL IS RESTRICTED TO AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY. I'M SORRY.
DO YOU RECOGNIZE WHAT THIS IS, CYBERBITCH?!! IT'S A POLICE SHIELD AND IT GIVES ME ACCESS TO WHEREVER I GODDAMN WANT!!
who?
NOW LET'S TRY IT AGAIN PENTHOUSE LEVEL, PLEASE
YES, LIEUTENANT BERG.
EASE UP, MAN
?
WAHHSHIT! WHADDAFUGGISDAT?!!
PENTHOUSE LEVEL
WUSSES.
¡MADRE DE DIOS!

MY DEAR LIEUTENANT BERG! PLEASE, COME. HAVE A SEAT.
WHOA!
...ah, AND BRING YOUR ESCORTS WITH YOU. IT'S DIFFICULT TO CONTROL MY PETS FROM THIS DISTANCE... I WOULDN'T WANT THEM TO BE INJURED...
IS IT JUST ME OR DO ALL THESE ANIMALS SEEM TO BE... COWED... AFRAID of SOMETHING ELSE IN HERE?
WHAT WAS IT THAT I READ ONCE? SOMETHING ABOUT HOW IN THE JUNGLE, EVEN THE PREDATORS KNOW WHO THE MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL IS...
NOW, LT. BERG, WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM? WHAT MADE A LOVELY WOMAN SUCH AS YOURSELF WANT TO BECOME A POLICE OFFICER?
I'M SORRY, MR MASSEROFF, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE LINE of DISCUSSION...
AS I UNDERSTAND IT, SIR, THERE WAS SOMETHING of.. URGENCY YOU WERE TO GIVE ME FOR THE CAPTAIN?
yyYES... of COURSE. AND THERE WAS SOME INFORMATION THAT YOUR CAPTAIN HAD FOR ME?
YES, RIGHT HERE IN MY JACKET POCKET--
--THEN THE "ITEM" FOR YOUR CAPTAIN IS UPSTAIRS IN MY PRIVATE STUDY. IF YOU WOULD JUST FOLLOW ME, PLEASE, LIEUTENANT

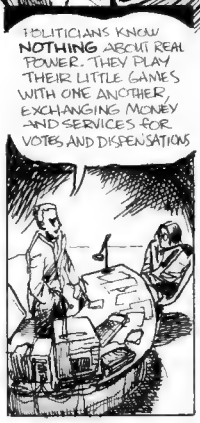
YOU GENTLEMEN WILL UNDERSTAND IF I ASK YOU BOTH TO REMAIN DOWN HERE, of COURSE?
of course, mr mossenoff. no problems.

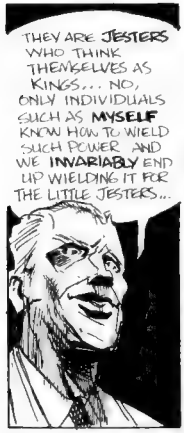
PLEASE, BE CAREFUL ON THESE STEPS, LIEUTENANT THEY CAN BE QUITE TRICKY.
THANKS I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND

TELL ME, LIEUTENANT, DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE POWER STRUCTURE of THIS CITY?


WHAT D'YOU MEAN?
I MEAN, DO YOU KNOW WHO IN THIS CITY TRULY WIELDS THE POWER? WHO TRULY CAN MAKE THINGS HAPPEN? WHO HOLDS THE STRINGS THAT MAKE THE PUPPETS DANCE?
I ASSUME THAT THE MAYOR AND OTHER CITY OFFICIALS ARE—

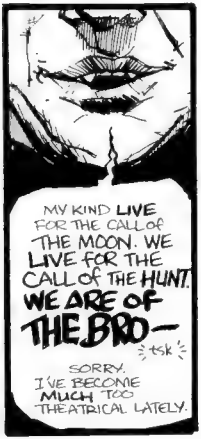
MAHAHAHA- mmph!
THAT IS ACTUALLY VERY AMUSING I COMMEND YOU. NO ONE HAS MADE ME LAUGH IN A VERY, VERY LONG TIME. HAHeh


POLITICIANS KNOW NOTHING ABOUT REAL POWER. THEY PLAY THEIR LITTLE GAMES WITH ONE ANOTHER, EXCHANGING MONEY AND SERVICES FOR VOTES AND DISPENSATIONS


THEY ARE JESTERS WHO THINK THEMSELVES AS KINGS... NO, ONLY INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS MYSELF KNOW HOW TO WIELD SUCH POWER AND WE INVARIABLY END UP WIELDING IT FOR THE LITTLE JESTERS...

"INDIVIDUALS," LIKE YOURSELF? AHH— NOW I GET IT ONLY THE RICH AND POWERFUL BUSINESSMEN KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR THE REST of US LIL' FOLK.
SCRATCH!

"BUSINESSMEN?" SURELY, LIEUTENANT, YOU'VE LIVED IN THIS CITY LONG ENOUGH TO REALIZE MY KIND ARE MUCH MORE THAN...
"BUSINESSMEN."


MY KIND LIVE FOR THE CALL of THE MOON. WE LIVE FOR THE CALL of THE HUNT. WE ARE OF THE BRO—
tsk
SORRY. I'VE BECOME MUCH TOO THEATRICAL LATELY.

THIS DISK IS FOR YOUR CAPTAIN. HE SHOULD FIND ITS CONTENTS SATISFACTORY. JUST LEAVE YOUR DISK FOR ME ON THE DESK. YOU AND YOUR ESCORTS MAY LEAVE
ZZ-?!
BONNK!
LIEUTENANT BEEG?
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SPEAKING OF YET. BUT YOU WILL... AND WHEN YOU DO, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME AGAIN
WHOOSH!
OH, MR MASSERCUFF...
>FILE (1) COPIED.
>FILE NAME: POLICE REIMBURSEMENT.
... I UNDERSTAND.
...I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY.
END.

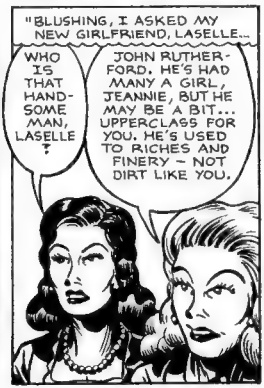
"I WAS A SCAPEGOAT FOR LOVE!"
KILL ME, JOHN, FOR THE SAKE OF OUR LOVE!
DO IT, IF THAT'S WHAT SHE WANTS!
BUT, HOW CAN I DESTROY THE WOMAN I LOVE?

"MY NAME IS JEAN BRUMFIELD. MY STORY BEGINS THE DAY MY MOTHER AND I MOVED INTO DALESVILLE – AN UPPER-CLASS RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD.
IT'S...IT'S LOVELY. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE!
AND WHAT A HOSPITABLE NEIGHBORHOOD, DEAR.

"WITHIN A WEEK WE WERE ESTABLISHED – AND INVITED TO A JOYOUS AND EXCLUSIVE COOKOUT!
HOW DO I LOOK, MOTHER?
WELL, IF YOU DON'T MIND LOOKING LIKE A RAT'S NEST, IT'LL DO...

"SOON WE WERE GORGING ON HOT DOGS AND STEAKS.

AND THEN...FROM ACROSS THE YARD... OUR EYES MET.


"BLUSHING, I ASKED MY NEW GIRLFRIEND, LASELLE...
WHO IS THAT HANDSOME MAN, LASELLE?
JOHN RUTHERFORD. HE'S HAD MANY A GIRL, JEANNIE, BUT HE MAY BE A BIT... UPPERCLASS FOR YOU. HE'S USED TO RICHES AND FINERY – NOT DIRT LIKE YOU.

"WHAT LASELLE SAID STABBED MY HEART... BUT NOT AS MUCH AS WHAT SHE SAID NEXT:
THE HOT DOGS ARE ALL GONE.

"I SAT DOWN ON THE FRONT PORCH STEPS AND WEPT.... KNOWING THAT WHAT LASELLE HAD SAID WAS TRUE; NOT ABOUT THE HOT DOGS – WELL, THAT WAS TRUE, BUT ABOUT JOHN BEING TOO GOOD FOR ME...
SOB

"MY MIND RACED...I KNEW THAT THE LOVE I HAD SEEN IN JOHN'S EYES WAS REAL – BUT THAT HE SHOULD DENY HIS PASSION FOR THE SAKE OF UPWARD MOBILITY. I IMAGINED NIGHTS WE MIGHT HAVE HAD TOGETHER...

"SUDDENLY, I FELT A ROUGH BUT GENTLE HAND TOUCH MY EYEBALL...
JOHN!
"HIS EYES... THEY SHIMMERED LIKE GLISTENING PLUTONIUM ON A HOT SUMMER NIGHT.
JEANNIE... THEY SAY YOUR NAME IS JEANNIE. IS IT TRUE?
YES, JOHNATHON.
AND IF I ASK YOU THREE WISHES, CAN YOU MAKE THEM COME TRUE?
"AT THIS, I KNEW NOT WHAT TO SAY, FOR I HAD NEITHER MAGICAL POWERS NOR WEALTH, NOR THE MEANS TO PRODUCTION.
YOU COULD NEVER TRULY GIVE YOUR LIFE TO ME, DEAR GENTLE JOHNATHON. I'M ONLY A LOWER-CLASS WENCH, A PROLETARIAN, A SCUM PATCH. YOU'D GROW TO RESENT ME... AND YOUR FAMILY WOULD TURN THEIR BACK ON YOUR DEAR, KIND LOVE.
"THE LIGHT THAT HAD SHONE SO BRIGHTLY IN JOHN'S EYES DIMMED LIKE A FLICKERING WOODY WOODPECKER NIGHT LIGHT... AND THEN RAGED BRIGHTLY AGAIN LIKE A FIRE RUN AMOK!
I LOVE YOU, JEANNIE. NO ONE CAN ARGUE WITH THAT!
NO-ONE CAN MUH-MUH-MUH MESS WITH THAT!
"I KNEW THAT I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT JOHN'S LOVE. BUT, I WAS ASKING TOO MUCH OF HIM: SETTING UP A QUEEN'S PLEASURE WORLD FOR A DRIED-UP LITTLE STICK GIRL. I'D RATHER DIE THAN SHAME HIS PROUD AND HAUGHTY NAME!
"THEN: DECISION TOOK HOLD LIKE A VICE CRUSHING THE HEAD OF A GOOSE!
KILL ME, JOHN! I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH TO LIVE AND LOVE AND DESTROY YOU-AND MYSELF!
BUT, JEANNIE-THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER WAY!

KILL ME, KILL ME, YOU BOLD, BRAZEN FOOL, BEFORE I DIE OF A BROKEN HEART! I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOUR HOT, HOT LOVE!
BUT... BUT....
"THEN MY MOTHER SPOKE UP....
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? KILL HER IF THAT'S WHAT SHE WANTS JOHN!
MRS. BRUMFIELD, I DON'T THINK IT'S MY PLACE TO...
WELL, IF YOU WON'T DO IT, I'LL HAVE TO DO IT MYSELF!
MOTHER!!
"WHO KNEW WHAT FURIES RAGED INSIDE MY POOR MOTHER'S HEAD? SHE PLUNGED HER HANDS AROUND MY NECK... TIGHTER, TIGHTER....
"AS MY WORLD TURNED BLACK, I COULD HEAR THE BARBEQUE'S GRACIOUS HOST, MR. RALSTON, BELLOWING:
SAY, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? THIS ISN'T A LOLLAPALOOZA! STOP IT THERE!
SHUT UP, YOU POMPOUS BAG OF HOT AIR!!!
"SUDDENLY, JOHN STABBED MY MOTHER IN THE BACK WITH A MEAT FORK!
GAHHHHHH!!
JOHNATHON! YOU- YOU WERE WILLING TO TAKE A HUMAN LIFE... FOR MY HAPPINESS.
FOR OUR HAPPINESS, DARLING. WHO KNOWS WHAT TROUBLED MONSTERS RACED THROUGH YOUR MOTHER'S FEEBLE BRAIN?
"AND SO WE WERE MARRIED. I NO LONGER WORE THAT DREARY AIR OF A SCAPEGOAT, BUT INSTEAD WALKED PROUDLY, WITH MY HEAD HELD HIGH, STRUTTING AROUND LIKE A CHICKEN."
End.

©1995 — MICHAEL R. NENO —

Carla
Allison
Jim Jigsaw
McCrea/Si Spencer

WHAT?
GODDAMN IT, THE LAST PIECE DOESN'T FIT
OH MY BACK
FOUR STRAIGHT HRS, AND WHAT HAPPENS..?
THE LAST PIECE DOESN'T FIT...
STORY OF MY LIFE..
OH, VERY DEEP
WELL, I'VE HAD ENOUGH.. I'M GOING TO COMPLAIN
CONSTRUCTION SITE

ITS JUST BEEN ONE GODDAMN THING AFTER ANOTHER
WHA..?! DON'T BELIEVE IT!
ROUND PIPE, SQUARE HOLE?!
..IS IT JUST ME, OR WHAT?
OH DEAR OH DEAR
POST BOX
SHOVE
OH DEAR
POST BOX
BURP
HEM HEM
SOMETIMES I THINK I'M ON THE WRONG PLANET
OPEN
I HATE THIS COAT, NAN
a.carter toyshop
SHURRUP! YOU'LL GROW INTO IT
DIANE, MIKE THAT BUSINESS WITH THE FLAMINGO. I MEAN...
carla sez:
remember Yo Yo's? Remember Rick James? Where is he now? Help. Keep an eye out 4 Mr. Telephone Head—he could just be round there
HOW DO YOU DO
SUAVE, SOPHISTICATED & COOL!

Continued on following page→

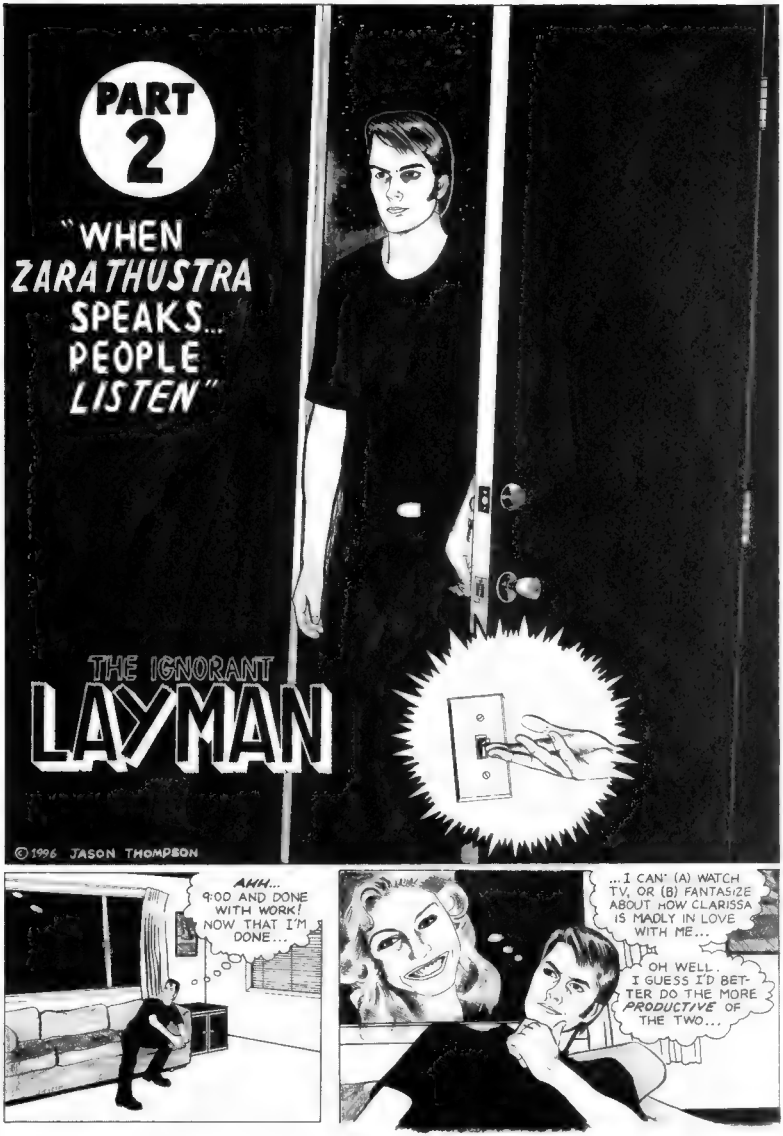
HELLO MADAM. HOW CAN I ASSIST YOU THIS WONDERFUL AFTERNOON?
Funeral Parlour
WELL, NOT ONLY IS IT PISSING DOWN, BUT...
OH DEAR OH DEAR MADAM
YOU'RE SNIGGERING AT THE WRONG CUSTOMER, SUNSHINE... WHATS THE JOKE?
...ITS THIS CRAP JIGSAW YOU SOLD ME- THE LAST PIECE DOSEN'T FIT!
FORGIVE MY ILL-TIMED HUMOUR, MADAM, BUT DON'T YOU SEE?..
TOY FUN
GROOVY GAME
THIS IS THE FIRST PIECE. YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG JIGSAW!
COOL
HERE, TRY THIS PUZZLE INSTEAD
...OH, I SEE. THANKS
TRAVEL AGENTS
a.carter
END

NAILS
Versus
WHIPSAW
ENOUGH WITH THE GAMES. MY BOSS WANTS THAT DISC BACK...
NOW!
CREATED, WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY
PHIL HESTER
INKED BY
ANDE PARKS
LETTERED BY GARY PETERSON

I LEAP INTO THE AIR, CUTTING AN ARC OF PAIN AND BEAUTY INTO THE SKIN OF THE SKY.
MY LIMBS UNFOLD LIKE THE PETALS OF A DEADLY ROSE.
SHWIK!
WHOA.
EACH HAND CARESSES THE CHEEK OF DEATH...
SWIP! SWAP!
PERHAPS TO WIPE AWAY A TEAR.
BUT WILL IT WASH AWAY THE BLOOD OF THE PANTHER?
WILL IT CLEANSE THE CRIMSON STAIN FROM MY BLOOD-SOAKED BREAST?

THE ENIGMA DEEPENS
THE DARKNESS GROWS
GROWING DEEPLY DAR—
POK! POK! POK!
WHAP!
LADY...
YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN TALKIN' OUT LOUD?

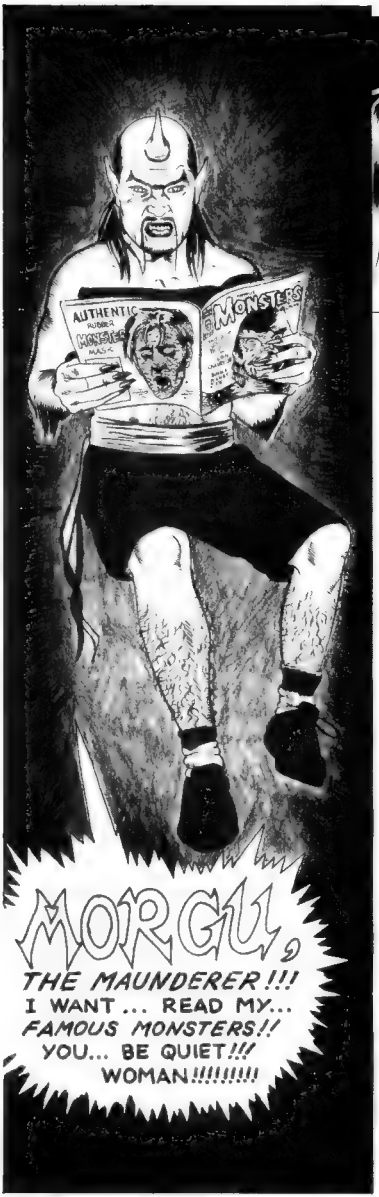
I'M GONNA TAKE IT EASY ON YOU. IT'S OBVIOUS YOU'VE BEEN AUGMENTED AND PROGRAMMED BY THE ENGINEERS AT TUCCI-LINSNER.
WEARING A G-STRING AND HIGH HEELS TO A FIREFIGHT IS A DEAD GIVEAWAY.
NOW SHOW SOME MANNERS AND GIVE ME THAT DISC.
HNAH!
SPLANG!
SORRY, MA'AM, HAVEN'T BEEN ANY BELLS TO RING DOWN THERE FOR YEARS
END!


PART 2
"WHEN ZARATHUSTRA SPEAKS... PEOPLE LISTEN"
THE IGNORANT LAYMAN
©1996 JASON THOMPSON
AHH... 9:00 AND DONE WITH WORK! NOW THAT I'M DONE...
...I CAN: (A) WATCH TV, OR (B) FANTASIZE ABOUT HOW CLARISSA IS MADLY IN LOVE WITH ME...
OH WELL. I GUESS I'D BETTER DO THE MORE PRODUCTIVE OF THE TWO...

NEW "NEVILLE RICKENBACHER'S GOURMET POPPING CORN" IS SO LOW IN FAT AND CHOLESTEROL THAT EVEN MY SENILE OLD GRAN'PA CAN EAT IT! HEH, HEH!
OH, SCREW YOU.
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING ON?
JOSS MOREAU
For President
--CE AGAIN, CLARISSA RAY, (INSERT OFFICIAL-SOUNDING INFORMATION THAT SAYS SHE WAS KIDNAPPED. USE YOUR IMAGINATION, KIDS)--
BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH, KEEP YOU INFORMED...
IN OTHER NEWS...
SON OF A BITCH MUST PAY!
It has begun.

WHAT HAS BEGUN? I DON'T GET IT, MR. LYLE
Ah, my dear Nebiros, you know. As a villain I am prone to say ominous lines of dialogue which presage an evil deed. Anyway...
MR. LYLE'S NEW SUIT'S JUST LIKE MINE. I THINK HE'S BEING A COPYCATTER.
I WONDER HOW IT CHANGES COLOR, THOUGH...
I think it is time for me to meet my bride-to-be. You will retrieve her.
NOW?
No, tomorrow. Of course I mean now, you idiot!
I SURE WISH MR. LYLE'D BE NICER TO ME. HAS HE EVER SAID, "Neb, you do a good job? OH, NO.
I'M FEELING PRETTY DAMN UNAPPRECIATED. SOME DAY I'LL BE THE MOST POWERFUL SEPHIROTH IN TOWN! AND THEN--LOOK OUT!
MAN! THAT'D BE RICH, WOULDNIT?
PEEKABOO! I SEE YOU!
SO WHAT D'YOU WANT-- A KEWPIE DOLL?

PLEASE DO NOT START ANY TROUBLE, MISS RAY.
MS.
WHATEVER. COME THIS WAY, PLEASE
LISTEN, ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OR AM I...
ALL WILL BE EXPLAINED TO YOU IN DUE TIME.
WELL, UNTIL YOU TELL ME WHERE I AM AND WHY I'M HERE...
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
OH, ALRIGHT THEN! YOU'RE IN OUR SECRET HIDEOUT UNDER AN "ERNEST'S" RESTAURANT.
HEY, I DON'T NEED YOUR SMART-ASS COMMENTS!
BUT THAT IS THE TRUTH, I TELL YOU!
YEAH, RIGHT!
FINE! DON'T BELIEVE ME! I DON'T CARE! YOU-- YOU-- OHH, FORGET IT!!
YOU SHUT UP, OR I'LL MAKE--
YOU SHUT UP, LADY!
ALRIGHT-- WHO'S THE MONKEY BOY TELLING ME TO SHUT UP?!
IS--I --


AUTHENTIC
MONSTERS
MORGU,
THE MAUNDERER!!!
I WANT... READ MY...
FAMOUS MONSTERS!!
YOU... BE QUIET!!!
WOMAN!!!!!!!!!
LISTEN, YOU RAY HARRYHAUSEN REJECT...
DON'T WORRY YOURSELF ABOUT HER, MORGU OL' PAL-- THE BOSS HAS GRAND PLANS IN STORE FOR LIL MISS CLARISS-- UH!
OH HE DOES DOES HE?
NOW-- LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN.
NEBBY!
ULP!

MR. LYLE IS WAITING FOR YOU IN THE GREEN ROOM...
OH, YOU'RE NOT STILL MAD AT ME ARE YOU?
NO. OF C-COURSE NOT.
I--I GAVE MY HEART TO HER...
...AND SHE ATE IT!
SORRY 'BOUT THAT, MISS CLARISS...
MR. LYLE'S IN THE ROOM TO YOUR LEFT. AND THERE...
YOU'LL FIND ALL YOU WISH TO KNOW.
Come in, Ms Ray, Come in...
I was just changing...

... INTO SOMETHING MORE COMFORTABLE! AHHHH... YEAH, MUCH BETTER! NOW I FEEL ALIVE!
HMM... THIS POSE FEELS... FAMILIAR, SOMEHOW.
WHOEVER KIDNAPPED CLARISSA WILL PAY! NOT IN MONEY, OF COURSE. NO, THEY'LL PAY IN BLOOD! BLOOD THAT WILL FLOW FREELY, LIKE STRAWBERRY RIVERS IN DAIRY QUEEN COMMERCIALS!
THIS AIN'T NO LAND OF DAIRY QUEEN, THOUGH. NO, IT'S A LAND OF RAPE AND HONEY. YES SIR! YOU BETCHA!
"THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA."
TO BE CONTINUED.

# MR. MURRAY® IN SHOPPING INFERNO®

©1993 CARNEY/TAYLOR

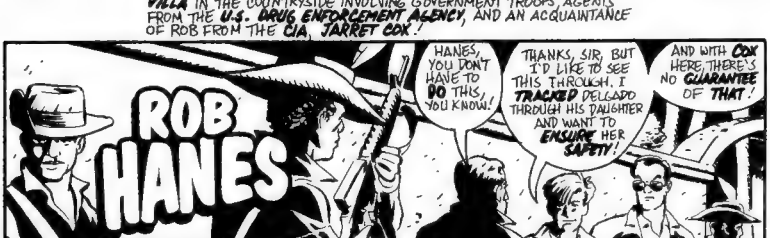
ian carney & dave taylor

MR.MURRAY AND CHARLIE TROUSERS ARRIVE AT THE CHECKOUT OF THEIR LOCAL MEGAMARKET®
EEEEEP!! I'VE JUST REALISED I HAVEN'T GOT ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY FOR THESE GOODS!
THE EMBARRASSMENT WE'LL BE THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE CRAP COMIC CHARACTERS GUILD!!
QUICK, EAT ALL THE STUFF BEFORE WE GET TO THE TILL!
I'VE SWALLOWED A 1.5 Kg BOX OF DAZ, CAN'T WAIT TO SEE MY 1.3 Kg BOX OF DAZ-SHAPED STOOL!!
SCIENTIFIC WONDER X RAY GLASSES
EEEEEP!! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH THE WRAPPERS?
SAME AS WE ALWAYS DO IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS, WE SET THEM ON FIRE!
GOOD THINKIN'!
RUN AWAY! THE WHOLE SUPERMARKET HAS CAUGHT FIRE!
COULD IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH US BURNIN' PAPER IN THE NMITE SPIRIT-BASED GOODS AISLE?
AND NOW THE FLAMES HAVE SPREAD THROUGH THE WHOLE NEIGHBOURHOOD.
I SURE HOPE ALL THOSE STRUGGLING SHOPKEEPERS HAVE HEFTY INSURANCE POLICIES TO FALL BACK ON!
THE FUNNY THING IS THAT I'VE RECHECKED MY MONEY AND I DID HAVE ENOUGH TO PAY FOR THAT SHOPPING!!
GOOD. YOU CAN BUY ME ANOTHER BOX OF DAZ. I'VE GOT A TASTE FOR THE STUFF!!!!!!
STOP.

The ROB HANES SECTION

**OUR STORY SO FAR:** **ROB HANES**, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR FOR **JUSTICE INTERNATIONAL** HAS BEEN SENT TO **SOUTH AMERICA** TO FIND OUT WHO IS USING THE **TRANSPORT PLANES** OF HIS CLIENT, A SMALL CARGO AIRLINE, FOR SMUGGLING **DRUGS**!

AFTER IDENTIFYING ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP OFFICERS, GEN. **HILARIO DELGADO**, AS A **DRUG LORD**, ROB SOON FINDS HIMSELF IN THE MIDST OF A MAJOR OPERATION THAT HAS CORNERED **DELGADO** TO A DESOLATE **VILLA** IN THE COUNTRYSIDE INVOLVING GOVERNMENT TROOPS, AGENTS FROM THE **U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY**, AND AN ACQUAINTANCE OF ROB FROM THE **CIA**, **JARRET COX**!


ROB HANES
in "Pact with the Devil"!
DEA
HANES, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS, YOU KNOW!
THANKS, SIR, BUT I'D LIKE TO SEE THIS THROUGH. I TRACKED DELGADO THROUGH HIS DAUGHTER AND WANT TO ENSURE HER SAFETY!
AND WITH COX HERE, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE OF THAT!
REAL FUNNY, KID!!

MEANWHILE...INSIDE THE VILLA...
PAPA! PLEASE! I'M SO SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE I HAVE CAUSED! I DID NOT KNOW THAT THIS HANES--
H'S DONE, ANTONIA MARIE! NOW BACK BEFORE THE TROOPS ARRIVE!

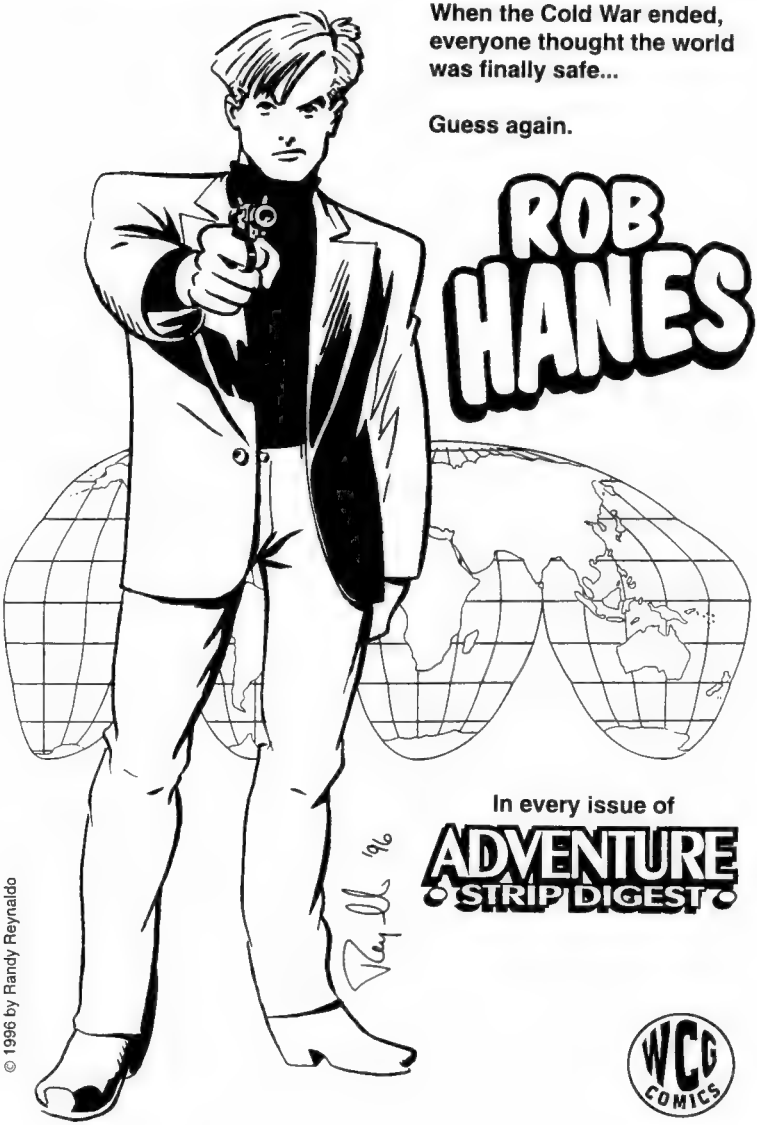
"...IT'S LIKE MAKING A PACT WITH THE DEVIL HIMSELF!"
YOU DON'T TRUST COX, DO YOU, HANES?
I WORKED WITH HIM IN THE MIDDLE EAST... AND I'M SUSPICIOUS OF HIM TURNING UP HERE ALL OF A SUDDEN!
AT THAT MOMENT, STATE TROOPS QUICKLY DISPATCH DELGADO'S GUARDS OUTSIDE THE VILLA!

...AND BEGIN THE ATTACK!
BAM!
THE ARMY DID A PRETTY THOROUGH JOB!
HA! THEY'RE RUNNIN' LIKE RABBITS!
LEAVE 'EM--OUR JOB'S TO PICK UP DELGADO!
ANTONIA! IT'S ROB!
WAIT A SEC! THIS IS HER ROOM!
CRASH
DELGADO!
I CAME TO PROTECT YOUR DAUGHTER, GENERAL--BUT YOU'LL DO!
!
HOLD IT!
--DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!
CLICK
!
HANES! WATCH YOUR BACK!
?
2

FREEZE, GENERAL!
COX, WHAT'RE YOU--
?
Senor Cox! so you've come for me PERSONALLY!
CLICK
ADIOS, DELGADO!
BAM BAM
:GCK:
AAAAH!
K-CHK
COX!
DAMMIT...
BAM BAM BAM
BAM BAM
BOOM
3

PAPA? PAPA!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, WHO LET HER IN? GET HER OUT OF HERE!
SOON, OUTSIDE...
WHY'RE YOU GETTIN' SO RILED UP, KID? HE DREW FIRST!
HE WAS A DRUG TRAFFICKER--NO LOSS TO HUMANITY!
THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT! HE RECOGNIZED YOU AND CALLED YOUR NAME BEFORE YOU SHOT HIM!
COME CLEAN--YOU CAME HERE TO MURDER HIM, DIDN'T YOU? YOU WERE ORDERED TO KILL HIM!
CORRECTION--I CAME TO NEUTRALIZE HIM...
I WAS AUTHORIZED TO DEAL WITH HIM, BUT ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, HE MADE MY JOB A LOT EASIER.
I SUSPECT HE WAS ABOUT TO BECOME AN EMBARRASSMENT!
WE WERE HIS HANDLERS SO HE KNEW A LOT ABOUT OUR PAST OPERATIONS--AND THAT'S INFORMATION WE COULDN'T ALLOW TO BECOME PUBLIC!
--AND YOU GUYS TRAINED HIM AND PROBABLY BANKROLLED HIS START AS A DRUG LORD!
MAYBE... BUT IN THIS LINE OF WORK, KID, SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE DEVIL IF YOU'RE GOING TO GET ANYTHING DONE...
YOU OKAY, KID?
YEAH... EXCEPT SOMETIMES I WONDER JUST WHO THE DEVIL IS?
END

# A New Hero for the New World Order . . .


When the Cold War ended, everyone thought the world was finally safe...
Guess again.
ROB HANES
In every issue of
ADVENTURE STRIP DIGEST
WCG COMICS
© 1996 by Randy Reynaldo

earthbound©1995
c woody / R.Lewis
each time the balloonman
Fills one
He Grimaces
Ties a knot around its feeble neck
Lets it bob
Sky ward
He knows the magic that pulls it
Does not extend beyond its shiny skin
is not conducted down string to fingers
You are too heavy
You have forgotten too many things

at night
pow!
bam!
in sleep...
The balloon man sees balloons descending
littering a faraway landscape
Drifting in ragged formations
strings dragging in dust
bob bing just out
of reach

# LETTERS

*Internet: 72164.1134@CompuServe* *P.O. Box 893 Acworth,GA 30101*

**Juergen A. Erhard**
Karlsruhe, Germany
jae@Laden2.ilk.de

Hi Joe,

I *had* to send you some comments on #35... or any issue. Email makes writing letters MUCH easier. Well... my faves in this issue: "Iron Empires!" Great art and story. I'm just curious... but are the two creators German? Because of the 'Maulwurf Bruder' logo... And can you tell me if there was anything "Iron Empire"ish in the past? Just raving.

"Tensor Matrix." Wonderful Art, nice Story. More coming? Hope so.

"No Regrets." Still great... although I'd like it much more with better art. No pupils, no mouths (the weirdest part of it). Intended or accidental? I fell like the latter it is. Well, it tells you something about how much I like the writing that I like it as much as I do.

"Big Mack and Frize." MORE! MORE! MORE! Nice ending.

"Transmission From Technical." Interesting.

The rest? Well... nice. "Mr. Mamoulian" was as strange as always. I like that. Oh, and my first encounter with "The Replacement God"... that'll be something I'd like to check out.

Ok, that's it for this month.

*The Moeller brothers are both American, but they could be of German background for all I know. I guess I could ask them. "Iron Empires" first appeared in a 4-issue, fully painted, mini-series from Dark Horse a few years back as SHADOW EMPIRES—a name they've since abandoned. They also appeared in a 3-issue story arc in DARK HORSE PRESENTS from issues #79-81. There will also be a new painted IRON EMPIRES series coming out from DC/Helix sometime in late '97.*

*And speaker of Mr. Moeller...*

**Christopher Moeller**
creator of IRON EMPIRES

To my dear friend Joe,

I'm writing because I have also been the puzzled recipient of a "Transmission from Technical." I'm sure the company in Glenn Purcell's "Technical" is the one I dealt with, because the stories are too close to be otherwise. I, a humble painter of science fiction comics, sent samples to "Technical's" Human Resources Division several years ago in the hope of securing work. I received a letter in response asking me to send them samples of my computer graphics work... concentrating specifically on the bold and creative use of type. My reaction was much the same as George Purcell's. I called back and said "I'm a painter. There must be some mistake." The efficient young lady from from Human Resources said "No sir, we're looking for designers right now." I repeated "No, you don't understand, I'm a painter, not a designer." She said "I look forward to seeing your submission, sir." Reading Greg Purcell's story in NB#35, I can't help wondering how many other souls are wandering around out there, confused, unmanned, their trust in a logical, rational world profoundly shaken. Great little story by the way, Gary! Keep up the good work!

*Uhh, okay, Chuck, thanks for the quick story. Next!*

**Edward Douglas**
76453,767@compuserve.com

Speaking of the genius of Greg DiGenti, that's a pretty nifty cover by the man himself... probably would look really nice on his own comic book! Is there any more chance of something like this ever happening?

I find it amazing that more creators don't end up collecting their NB work into volumes such as you've done with KILROY and Phil Hester did with BONESHAKER. Who ends up making these decisions on whether something warrants reprinting? (Of course, people can always wait for the "Best of" collections.)

Well, you can't really top opening up with one of Zander Cannon's classic REPLACEMENT GOD preludes, and Knute's 187th escape attempt was as funny as the last few. I think that it started out a bit slow, though, with the guards spending too much time talking about the geese, but fortunately, this served a purpose. I always get a kick out of Knute's inventive use of the mechanics of that day and age, and this was no exception. I hope this continues to be a regular feature in NB.

"God is Love" is one of the stranger installments of "Mr. Mamoulian." This strip is growing on me with each issue.

I really enjoy Christopher Moeller's "Iron Empires". The world that he's created is original as are the characters that inhabit it, and this story is an especially innovative use of

the science-fiction genre. This seems to follow more along the lines of his DARK HORSE PRESENTS serial rather than his Dark Horse mini SHADOW EMPIRES, but I enjoy his line art as much as his painted work. I'm very glad to see that you managed to get this for NEGATIVE BURN and I only wish that I didn't have to wait two months between installments. "Tensor Matrix" seems to be a story that might have been more suited for the NEW WORLDS ANTHOLOGY, and in general, it seemed like there were quite a few science fiction stories in this issue. The story was okay—very classical science-fiction idea—and I liked John Mendoza's artwork. The ending was a bit predictable.

Looks like "No Regrets" is finally coming to a close, and while this was an enjoyable series, the ending was a bit of a disappointment. Maybe it went on a little too long, but Nicholson did manage to express some original ideas in an entertaining story. Again, I probably have to read this series all in one sitting to appreciate it more.

I thought the "Alan Moore Songbook" had already been expended. I wouldn't mind hearing the music that goes along with the words. Did you say at one point that Alan was thinking of releasing a CD of his songs accompanied by the visual interpretations from NEGATIVE BURN?

Next up, the Caliber preview of the issue—and one that I've been looking forward to reading for awhile—SHIP OF FOOLS! This was a bit short, but I'm fascinated by this character and this seems to have the sort of dark humor that I enjoy. I can't wait to meet the rest of the motley crew! Mike Oeming's art has really developed over the years and is looking really nice in this story.

Jesse Reklaw's dream strip, "The End", was a nice change of pace even though I'm not usually into this sort of thing.

Likewise, the Dave Johnson sketchbook is making me a believer in the sketchbook section of NB; you've really managed to get a lot of nice pieces in the last few issues, and there are a lot of great ideas here.

Mark Bloodworth's "Captain Kelly and her Renegade Robot Destroyers", another science-fiction story, that ended up being shorter than I thought it would be. The punch line was pretty funny. Bloodworth has a detailed art style that I wouldn't mind seeing more often.

"Big Mack and Frize" was a lot of fun! I enjoyed the characters, and the concept of winning a personal demon in a tarot poker game is pretty amusing. I wonder if they intend these characters for more than one story. Again, I'm not familiar with these two creators, but Rick Rawling is a talented artist who could probably handle anything that a superhero writer could throw at him. This ended up being one of the more action-packed stories in NB in awhile, and I loved Rawling's sense of visual humor. A pleasant surprise.

I'm not really sure what Andy Bennett was driving at with his story "Change". This was a bit too slow to follow directly after "BM & F" and I wasn't too crazy about the artwork. This brings up another interesting point. I know that you get a lot of submissions, but how do you decide which issue to put them in and in what order? It seems like this must be as hard a process as putting together a song order for an album. (I've been through that a number of times and man, it's hard!)

Likewise, Ian Shepard also seems to be trying to get a message across with "You Never Know", but this also seemed to be a bit too preachy for my tastes. I think that these sorts of stories need to be told over more time in order for readers to relate to the characters. It's not often that a story perfectly captures the frustrations of being a freelancer, but Gordon Purcell's "Transmission from Technical" nailed it. Gordon not only has it sussed, but he manages to run the gamut of emotions in a three-pager that is almost as funny as it is depressing.

"Horman" seemed like another one of those filler humor strips that don't really affect me either positively or negatively.

This really wasn't the best issue of NB that I've read. A lot of the stories seemed a bit like leftovers from the NEW WORLDS ANTHOLOGY, even though I liked some of these SF stories better. "Transmission from Technical" takes top honors as my favorite story of the issue with Zander Cannon's "Replacement God" bits always being entertaining. Still, I liked #34 better.....and there, I was hoping to see a Greg Digenti story in this issue, too!

Is it just me or do you have letters from the same people in almost every issue? I guess that either Olav Beemer, Mike Leonard and Gelb Boon have as nonexistent a social life as I do....or you really need to increase your circulation if there are only us four reading NEGATIVE BURN! <G> Then again, the fantastic letters columns in every issue must have been part of why NB was nominated for two Harveys, right? <VBG>

*It does seem like the same people are writing in every issue, Ed. Hey! All you out there reading this WRITE! Mars needs more women and I need more letters!*

*Your wish is our command. Greg DiGenti is hard at work on his very own one-shot to come out from Caliber sometime in 1997. Watch this space for any announcements.*

*Also, you may have noticed by now, but Jeff Nicholson's "NoRegrets" actually didn't finish up till #36, so there's still more for you to read. Pay attention, Edward. <g>*

*And what's that crack about my NB stories being leftovers from NEW WORLDS ANTHOLOGY?! I'll have you know that I give them MY leftovers! <G> Nah, actually neither one of us sees the others submissions very often*

*so there really isn't any overlap to speak of.*

**Olav Beemer**
Zeist, The Netherlands

Dear Joe,

The magic number of fifteen returns again with NEGATIVE BURN #35. Is it a coincidence the past three issues have contained exactly fifteen different features or not? Either way, it does mean enough food for thought, so let's jump right in and see what I have to say about all those many features, then.

Zander Cannon's work is growing on me and this issue's installment of his "Replacement God" only added to the growing excitement I feel about especially his style of artwork. It's open, inviting and very clean, with the possible exception of the second page of this issue's tale, and together with the entertaining story, this could become something I could start looking forward to.

The "Mr. Mamoulian" feature was very absurd and even had me chuckling at several instances, but the continued story called "Iron Empires" was a bigger surprise for me. While I did see some potential in the previous installment, the two Moellers most assuredly have turned things around this time as their story took an unexpected twist and now breathes a wholly different atmosphere. It'll be interesting to see where this one will be going when it continues.

"Tensor Matrix: Salvage" was one of the best and most entertaining pieces of work in this very issue. A well-paced science fiction story with a lovely ironic ending, good storytelling and some truly nice artwork in a style one doesn't come across very often these days.

And speaking of offbeat styles, that obviously goes for "No Regrets" as well. In this sixth chapter Jeff Nicholson is finally shifting gears and now officially nearing what appears to be an interesting climax to his already powerful and enjoyable tale. It's good to see this book is willing to include features which run for more than two issues, and "No Regrets" is the best proof that it works.

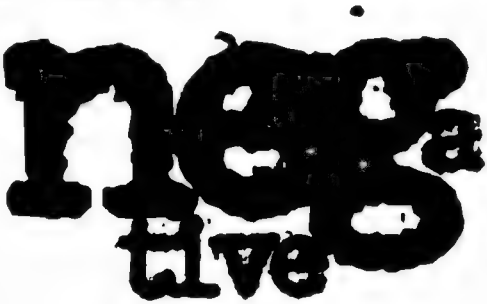
The "Ship of Fools" installment wasn't my cup of tea, even though I must admit Michael Avon Oeming's artwork was just right for the tale's eerie atmosphere. Fortunately, the short one-page story called "April 13, 1993" was able to capture my undivided interest again. How can a story so short be so powerful and true to life? I guess because it could happen to anybody. Jesse Reklaw can return for another short story at any time, if you ask me.

"Captain Kelly" turned out to be another short and relatively simple story, but what I noticed most here was the good artwork by Mark Bloodworth. Although it definitely needs some polishing in certain areas such as good panel-to-panel composition, the style is very inviting and the overall results look good enough for me to have me looking forward to future occasions where I can see his artwork. The same goes for "Big Mack and Frize," but only for a different reason, namely the story by Noel K. Hannan. While the art was decent enough (maybe a bit chaotic at times), it was the well-paced tale that did the trick, especially the funny and very unexpected ending. Good job, there.

The following two installments, "Change" on the one hand and "You Never Know" on the other, were both decent but lacked just that little extra to make them entertaining or interesting, but luckily, the issue ended on a high and humorous note with Purcell and Fricke's "Transmission from Technical" and "Horman." Especially the lovely art and the tongue-in-cheek humor in the first and the absurd humor in the latter were great touches.

Looking back, this probably was one of those issues that didn't contain many truly outstanding features, yet almost every single one of those features was entertaining enough to make the overall opinion on the issue a very positive one. For which my congratulations, natch.

*If you liked Jesse Reklaw's one-pager than you may want to try to hunt down his self-published title CONCAVE UP (2 issues are out now that I know of). It's a collection of stories like this one and all are very surreal and entertaining. You can probably just order directly to Jesse at PO Box 200206, New Haven, CT 06520-0206. 4-issue subscriptions are available for $8.95. Tell him Joe sent ya.*



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